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Third-Generation Chemotherapy Agents in the Treatment of Advanced Non-small Cell Lung Cancer: A Meta-Analysis

To the Editor:

The *Journal of Thoracic Oncology* has published in its September 2007 issue a meta-analysis about third-generation agents in the treatment of advanced non-small cell lung cancer.[1] The authors have considered the randomized trials published until March 2004. Nineteen studies were selected for the analysis. Some trials published before 2004[2–8] were not included without very obvious reasons. All are European authors or publications in European journals. Vinblastine has to be considered as one of the active second-generation drugs, the place of epirubicin among those is more debatable. In addition, some important studies have been published after 2004. It is not clear why the authors have limited the literature review to March 2004 to perform the meta-analysis and to publish 3 years later without updating the results.

In addition, a subgroup meta-analysis of the trials comparing third-generation doublets with second-generation triplets would probably show no survival difference as suggested on Figure 5. Two recently published studies[9,10] might be added to increase the power of the aggregation, although carboplatin has been used instead of cisplatin. This is an important question because those types of triplets are still used in daily practice for multiple reasons including cost.

Finally, overall survival rather than 1-year survival should have been considered, an end point fully possible in literature-based meta-analyses.

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Third-Generation Chemotherapy Agents in the Treatment of Advanced Non-small Cell Lung Cancer: A Meta-Analysis

To the Editor:

We would like to thank Drs. Sculier and Meert for their constructive criticism of our recent meta-analysis of third-generation agents in the treatment of advanced non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).[1] Their comments re-

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